

| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE | | | | Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
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| 1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 13-02-2006 | | 2. REPORT TYPE FINAL | | 3. DATES COVERED (From - To) | |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Joint Sea Base: Transforming and Shaping the Theater | | | | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5b. GRANT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER | |
| 6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Commander Richard C. McDaniel, USN Paper Advisor (if Any): Commander Brent Griffin, USN | | | | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5e. TASK NUMBER | |
| | | | | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER | |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207 | | | | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER | |
| 9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) | | | | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) | |
| | | | | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) | |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited. | | | | | |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy. | | | | | |
| 14. ABSTRACT The Joint Sea Base has significant capabilities to accomplish the TSCP mission and is poised to take a substantial role in shaping the Theater for the Combatant Commander. The JSB provides the capability and access to emerging areas where a US presence is needed, but large US footprints ashore are prohibited. With the realignment of US forces resulting in fewer personnel and facilities overseas, the role of the JSB in conducting the TSC mission will increase. The JSB can serve as a valuable transformation tool meeting the needs that result from diminished resources attributed to global basing realignment. With the procurement of additional platforms to support the JSB and the full integration of the joint force, the effectiveness of the JSB in shaping the theater will increase. The end result is the JSB emerging as a capability that enables the Combatant Commanders to conduct the TSC mission in the days ahead. | | | | | |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS The Joint Sea Base, Theater Security Cooperation, The Role of Overseas Bases. | | | | | |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: UNCLASSIFIED | | | 17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT | 18. NUMBER OF PAGES 21 | 19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept |
| a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED | b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED | c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED | | | 19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556 |

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The Joint Sea Base: Transforming and Shaping the Theater

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract

The Joint Sea Base has significant capabilities to accomplish the TSCP mission and is poised to take a substantial role in shaping the Theater for the Combatant Commander. The JSB provides the capability and access to emerging areas where a US presence is needed, but large US footprints ashore are prohibited. With the realignment of US forces resulting in fewer personnel and facilities overseas, the role of the JSB in conducting the TSC mission will increase. The JSB can serve as a valuable transformation tool meeting the needs that result from diminished resources attributed to global basing realignment. With the procurement of additional platforms to support the JSB and the full integration of the joint force, the effectiveness of the JSB in shaping the theater will increase. The end result is the JSB emerging as a capability that enables the Combatant Commanders to conduct the TSC mission in the days ahead.

Thesis

The Joint Sea Base (JSB) can act as a critical enabler in satisfying Theater Security Cooperation Planning (TSCP) requirements through the forward positioning of the joint force allowing access to challenging areas without placing large numbers of military personnel permanently ashore. More than ever, it is essential that the United States foster new relationships that build reliable coalition partners throughout the world via TSCP in order to counter today's global and transnational threats. However, access in many regions requiring TSC activities is limited resulting from security restrictions, unfavorable political climates, or the lack of US overseas bases to support these operations. The arguments presented shall accomplish the following:

- Define the JSB and TSCP.
- Examine the role of traditional bases and determine the functions the JSB satisfies.
- Establish a link between the capabilities of the JSB and the dynamic mission of TSC.
- Examine the role the JSB plays in DoD transformation.
- Explores the capabilities of the JSB as it relates to TSCP requirements.
- Discuss the Way Ahead- Joint Sea Base integration and conducting the TSC mission

The intent of the paper is to recommend innovative solutions to assist Combatant Commanders in shaping the theater through Security Cooperation and the JSB.

The Joint Sea Base Defined.

The Seabasing definition varies depending on which service component is asked, and if current capabilities or future capabilities are considered when answering the question. The Joint Integrating Concept (JIC) defines Seabasing as:

the rapid deployment, assembly, command, projection, reconstitution and re-employment of joint combat power from the sea, while providing continuous support, sustainment and force protection to select expeditionary joint forces without reliance on land bases within the joint operational area.¹

The JIC definition of Seabasing must be understood to include legacy systems in its scope. Often, Seabasing refers to future capabilities and operations of the US Navy. However, during a recent media roundtable interview with the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), Admiral Mullen clarified the Seabasing definition to a reporter,

Every ship you mentioned is a sea base. The MPF Future is not the sea base. It should someday be part of it. But what you saw in Indonesia, that's a different sea base. What you see in the Gulf right now is a different sea base. What you saw in Katrina is a different sea base. The hundreds of ships lined up around, from Turkey all the way to the Gulf before OEF. That's another view of the sea base. And I think this is really an important point to make. The sea base is made up of lots of different capabilities.²

The CNO's comments dispel the idea that the Sea Base and Seabasing are concepts that will exist ten or twenty years in the future with the construction of additional ships. Rather, the JSB describes how the U. S. Navy integrates and operates in conjunction with the joint force today.

The CNO commented in a later interview about the necessity of expanding Seabasing capabilities, and not just associating the term with the production and building of new ships.

When it comes to Sea Power, I want to get at the 'how,'" Mullen said. "I am convinced that if we don't, if we don't take a look around at how we are being utilized by this nation today, and how we may be utilized in the future, we run the risk of not being ready when we are called upon, or not being called upon even if we think we are ready."³

Clearly, Seabasing is much more than shipbuilding programs. Seabasing is a primary pillar of the "Sea Power 21" concept of operations that describes the standard mode of operations for the United States Navy, joint and sustained operations from the sea. There are many examples profiling these types of operations. One such example occurred during Operation Enduring Freedom. The USS Kitty Hawk acted as an Afloat Forward Staging Base for Army and Air Force Special Operations Forces to conduct long range strikes in Afghanistan.⁴ The

JSB is about present US Navy capabilities and relevant to how the US military operates today.

What is Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) and why is it so important?

Theater Security Cooperation Plans (TSCP) are defined as:

all Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.⁵

These operations shape the theater for the Combatant Commander in order to create favorable relationships with international and coalition partners. Specifically, “security cooperation is designed to support the defense strategy, advance regional defense policy goals, and in the immediate term enable the war on terrorism.”⁶

Theater Security Cooperation Activities are formally managed programs designed to implement a Combatant Commander’s Theater Security Cooperation strategy. The activities are outlined in eight categories:

- **Operational Activities** – Forces conducting humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, etc.
- **Combined (Multinational) Exercises** – Forces involved in multinational exercises
- **Security Assistance** – Grant funding for US arm sales
- **Combined Training** – Host nation training related to equipment purchased from US
- **Combined Education** – Military courses taught in country
- **Military Contacts** – Activities that allow interaction between US and foreign militaries
- **Humanitarian Assistance** – Critical support provided during disaster relief or crisis
- **Other Engagement Activities** – Other TSC activities

Subsets of these categories are TSCP activities that include:

- **Humanitarian Assistance**
- **International Military Education and Training**
- **Joint Combined Exercise Training**
- **Mobile Team Training**
- **Senior Officer Visits**
- **Combined Exercises**
- **Conferences and Seminars**
- **Multi-national Exercises**
- **Deployment for Training**
- **Exchange Programs**

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The reality of a post 9/11 world requires a significant investment of resources in TSCP activities to bring stability to specific “hotspots” or regions of the world. The philosophy behind security cooperation activities is: “buy early with a discount, or buy later at full price, but either way, you have to pay!” In other words, invest now to strengthen US relations, promote good will, gain access, and increase stability in critical regions in order to prevent conflicts or major combat operations in the future. Failure to invest could result in unstable regions, denied US access, a safe haven for terrorists, and increase the likelihood of combat operations in order to eliminate the threat.

What are the roles of traditional overseas bases? Is the Joint Sea Base a suitable replacement for the overseas base?

During the Cold War, a global network of bases with multiple joint capabilities satisfied North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) requirements, accomplished the Theater Security Cooperation mission, and facilitated the forces required to complete these missions. However, today finds the majority of overseas bases still postured for the Cold War era and not positioned to meet the needs in many regions of the world. Efforts to transition the force to better respond to a post 9/11 threat are proving to be monumental in

scope and slow in effecting change.⁹ The nature of the threat today demands a US presence be maintained throughout the world. However, this reality has been met with several fiscal and political obstacles. A secure world demands that the US be postured to shape the security environment, and respond to crisis in a timely and effective manner. The graphic below contrasts the roles of bases during the Cold War and today:

| | Cold War | Present |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Security Environment | -Two super powers -Treaty obligations -Terrorism almost non-existent | -Regional instability in multiple locations -Terrorist concerns mounting |
| Overseas Base Purpose | -Deterrence against threat. -Secondary engagement with Allies | -Security Cooperation with Allies -Deterrent effect |
| Base Type | -Large, fixed, single service -Located near threats | -Multiple locations required -Regionally focused -Non-permanent |
| Access | -Access part of treaties | -Difficult/restrictive -Impossible |
| Infrastructure | -Mature -Robust | -Austere -Non-existent |
| Force Structure | -Large -Stable | -Smaller -Shrinking |

The comparison of the time periods depicts a world that has changed dramatically and requires a new posture to deal with the threat. The pertinent question is how can the United States fulfill its overseas requirements with fewer forces and limited fiscal resources? Specifically, how can a robust, joint force hampered by limited access and poorly positioned bases be effective in maintaining a global presence? In view of present day limitations, how can the US conduct critical Theater Security Cooperation operations in vital areas? One possible solution is the **Joint Sea Base**.

The JSB is **not** the panacea for challenges associated with overseas basing, but it clearly fills many of the same roles that overseas bases have filled in the past. The Atlantic

Council of the United States defines the role of overseas bases in their *Global Futures and Implications for U.S. Basing* report:

In peacetime, overseas bases help sustain a stable, predictable environment that promotes economic and political development and, at the same time, maintains and enhances U.S. influence in a region. They provide opportunities for military-to-military contacts that are often useful in subsequent collective efforts. In crisis, bases provide the capability to rapidly surge U.S. forces and promote U.S. political interests.¹⁰

Again, the JSB, while not a replacement for a base, can fill the role when access is limited. The JSB operating in a world “hotspot”, even when offshore, lends itself to the creation of a stable and predictable environment that promotes economic and political development. Additionally, military contacts are established and maintained via combined exercises or other TSCP initiatives conducted from the JSB as directed by the Combatant Commander. Many underdeveloped regions, (i.e. North Africa, Sub Sahara Africa, the Middle East etc...) could be assisted via the JSB when political sensitivities prevent a large footprint, the theater is immature, or Non Government Organizations (NGO) / International Organizations (IO) involvement is precluded due to security issues.

The Atlantic Council of the United States further expounds on the roles bases can play during post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization efforts:

Bases also are essential to support post-conflict reconstruction and stabilization efforts. And the Asian tsunami in December 2004 dramatically demonstrated the importance of U.S. overseas bases and base access for large scale humanitarian operations.¹¹

Should large scale humanitarian operations arise, the JSB is well suited to respond quickly and with the capability to properly address emergency situations. Here the JSB provides an invaluable service because of its self-sustaining nature. As recently demonstrated during the Tsunami disaster relief and Hurricane Katrina, the JSB exceeded expectations and was

critical in successful disaster relief activities. In many respects the JSB outperformed the “land base” during relief operations due to its self sustaining nature and the number of services provided to the community. For example, during the initial stages of the disaster, the JSB provided a more reliable base of command and control operations than bases ashore due to the significant damage to area infrastructure such as electricity, water, sanitation, etc... Ambassador Likins commented on the importance of the JSB during Hurricane Katrina:

Quickly assembling and operating at sea, the U.S. Navy put together a critical and complex sea-based command, control, and communications network to coordinate sea, land, and air resources to contain the effects and begin restoration operations. The seemingly seamless coordination of effort and ability to integrate civil and foreign capabilities underscored the maritime component’s innate ability to operate at sea under the most challenging conditions.¹²

The Ambassador’s comments highlight that the JSB can fill the role of an overseas base when access is prohibited. With continued improvement to logistics and the increasing number of Sea Base connectors the JSB will eventually become the optimal platform for conducting security operations in challenging areas around the world.

How is the Joint Sea Base related to Theater Security Cooperation?

Theater Security Cooperation seeks a “unity of effort” for combating the global terrorist threat and provides access to many critical areas in the world today.¹³ Conversely, our global basing strategy is the launching platform from which TSC programs are implemented.¹⁴ Since 9/11, most Americans have a better understanding of the terrorist enemy and the challenges associated with the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Many Americans understand the need for Theater Security Cooperation and realize that America can not “go at it alone” when conducting world affairs. One of our countries most valuable assets is the diplomatic relationships maintained with friends and coalition partners.¹⁵ The

United States' recent history in Iraq demonstrates the necessity of building coalitions for legitimacy when executing foreign policy. International coalitions are the foundation that empowers the United States to effectively fight the GWOT. Nations cooperate with the US in the GWOT because of the realization that transnational threats transcend country borders and threaten society on a global scale.¹⁶ TSCP is the mechanism by which these partnerships are established, nurtured, and developed into productive alliances that foster mutual trust and understanding.

The Pentagon recently emphasized the importance of “stability building” operations for the Joint Force. No longer is the military’s primary focus solely on Major Combat Operations (MCO) with little consideration given to Post Combat Operations or the transition to nation building and humanitarian operations. DoD Directive 3000 states that stability operations are a core U.S. military mission and shall be integrated to include doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, material, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations said the policy prevents terrorists from establishing a presence in ungoverned areas and failing states throughout the world.¹⁷

The JSB and its role in TSCP are well suited. With the rebasing of US forces, and the JSB exploitation of the sea’s common areas to access previously restricted areas make it optimal for TSC. General Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, described the benefits of TSC executed via the JSB:

If we are able to do it right in phase zero, I would argue that they won’t have to do a phase one, phase two, phase three,”....“With seabasing, with the ability to bring a force in, keep it at sea, put the capabilities that you need into the country, provide the training, provide the medical care, provide the dental care, provide whatever is needed in that particular country and then come back out to sea, you have provided

help to that country, you have recognized that country's sovereignty, and you have made it more stable.¹⁸

Utilizing the JSB provides options to the Combatant Commander that he wouldn't otherwise have. During limited access situations such as disaster relief, or operations where security is a concern, the Joint Force can now provide the support necessary to support the desired mission. For example, in December 2002, Joint Task Force, Horn of Africa (JTF HOA) was stood up on USS Mount Whitney to provide a regional focus in Yemen and East Africa. The JSB enabled the JTF staff to exercise Command and Control of counter-terrorism operations while embarked on USS Mount Whitney for four to six months until Camp Lemonier, Djibouti was completed.¹⁹

Is the Joint Sea Base a key capability for transformation?

The Overseas Basing Commission examined the Global Basing Strategy of the United States. The study reviewed basing strategies, specifically the rebasing of 70,000 personnel from overseas to the Continental United States (CONUS).²⁰ Interestingly enough, many of the commission's primary concerns were operational requirements, mobility and basing costs.²¹ One could argue the JSB strengths meet the rebasing shortfalls presented in the Commission's report. The impact of these factors can be mitigated when employing the JSB.

Operational requirements – The report states that forces must meet force projection demands placed on them under existing strategies and plans. Additionally, training and equipment must be adequate to the task, access to key locations assured.²² The JSB routinely operates where access is limited, and deploys with training and sustainment sufficient to conduct security cooperation operations from the sea.

Mobility - the commission believed adequate sealift, airlift, and pre-positioned equipment does not exist and that intra-theater airlift is stretched beyond capacity while plans for future assets do not meet the anticipated future demand.²³ While mobility is a valid concern for MCO which requires significant lift resources, TSC operations can be accomplished via current logistics capabilities as demonstrated during the Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Rebasing costs- Projected rebasing estimates for 2006-2011 are nine to twelve billion dollars; however an independent study estimated costs to be around twenty billion dollars. The costs alone ensure the realignment of forces will be a lengthy process.²⁴ Deployment of the Joint Sea Base could be utilized to maintain a global presence and possibly a cheaper alternative, depending on the scope of operation, when conducting TSC overseas during the realignment of the US military force.

What are the Joint Sea Base capabilities and how can it accomplish the TSC mission?

Combatant Commanders should utilize the JSB to satisfy TSC activities other than port visits or the U.S. Navy responding in a humanitarian assistance role. The U.S. Navy has always conducted these missions very effectively, and while these are important missions for TSCP, the JSB must become fully joint and much broader in scope. Numerous Seabasing assets can comprise the JSB and are available to the Combatant Commanders depending on the nature of the TSC mission:

- Expeditionary Strike Forces (ESF)
- Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESG)
- Carrier Strike Groups (CSG)
- Surface Strike Groups (SSG)
- Amphibious Forces (AF) / Landing Force (LF)
- Military Sealift Command / Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force
- Prepositioning and Sealift Programs
- Joint High Speed Vessel (HSV)

- Littoral Combat Ship (LCS)

On a routine basis CSGs and ESGs routinely deploy to meet Global Naval Force Presence requirements. The United States maintains a global presence with CSG and ESG assets and each possess organic capabilities that support TSC operations. In fact, many multi-national exercises are conducted in direct support of the Combatant Commander's TSC strategy. Other activities conducted from the JSB include Distinguished Visitor (DV) embarks, official visits, and ship rider programs. This list is not all inclusive, but serves to make a point; only the Navy conducts these missions in support of the TSC mission. The time is right for the JSB to incorporate and conduct a full range of TSC activities.

The Way Ahead - JSB Integration

With DoD, specifically Directive 3000, expanding the importance of stability building operations, the TSC mission will become a greater priority. Additionally, with rebasing, and the expeditionary capabilities of the JSB, Combatant Commanders will rely more on the JSB to conduct Theater Shaping operations. Therefore, Combatant Commanders must look for innovative ways to integrate all services and government agencies into the TSC mission and satisfy operations via the JSB. Numerous possibilities exist on how the integration could occur, but the following recommendations move in a joint direction that facilitates TSC goals.

- **Incorporate Department of State Liaisons.**

Directive 3000 states,

Integrated civilian and military efforts are key to successful stability operations. Whether conducting or supporting stability operations, the Department of Defense shall be prepared to work closely with relevant U.S. Departments and Agencies²⁵

Recently, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice emphasized the importance of the military and the Department of State working closely together.

Over the past 15 years, as violent state failure has become a greater global threat, our military has borne a disproportionate share of post-conflict responsibilities because we have not had the standing civilian capability to play our part fully... This was true in Somalia, in Haiti, in Bosnia, in Kosovo and it is still partially true in Iraq and Afghanistan.” “I want America's diplomats to eagerly seek out assignments working side by side with our men and women in uniform, whether it is in disaster relief in Pakistan or in stabilization missions in Liberia, or fighting the illegal drug trade in Latin America," "The diplomacy of the 21st century requires better jointness... between our soldiers and our civilians, and we are taking additional steps to achieve it.”²⁶

The JSB should incorporate DoS representatives (regional experts) to coordinate operations with the military when conducting TSC activities. Specifically, a Joint Interagency Control Group (JIACG) cell as part of the JTF should be incorporated on the JSB. DoD Directive 3000 provides additional guidance for these teams,

Military-civilian teams are a critical U.S. Government stability operations tool. The Department of Defense shall continue to lead and support the development military-civilian teams.²⁷

The placement of a JIACG cell aboard the JSB will be mutually beneficial to ensure the military understands the dynamics of a region, and DoS representatives and the US Embassy have a better understanding of military operations conducted in support of TSC activities.

- **Integrate Non Government Organization (NGO) Coordination Elements.**

When conducting security cooperation operations, particularly humanitarian assistance, coordination and synchronization with numerous NGOs and IOs often present a challenge. During the Tsunami disaster, Combined Support Force (CSF) 536 was formed to coordinate initial disaster relief efforts. CSF 536 worked with U.S. embassies and USAID field elements, including USAID Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) to ensure a seamless response. The Combined Coordination Cell headed relief efforts among the military and NGOs. Cooperation and coordination leveraged the strengths of each organization and created a synergy that resulted in successful relief operations.²⁸ This model

of coordination among multiple agencies and the military should be the standard for future operations. DoD Directive 3000 directs integration of DoD with NGO/IOs:

The Department of Defense shall be prepared to work closely with global and regional international organizations, U.S. and foreign non-government organizations²⁹

The Medical Service Corp, Chaplains Corp, Public Affairs Officers, and Foreign Affairs Officers are well suited to liaison with host nation officials, the military, and NGOs during humanitarian assistance operations. Additionally, the Joint Task Force should have planning and coordination cells designated, ready to integrate in a Civilian Military Operations Center (CMOC) on the JSB when the next disaster or crisis occurs.³⁰

- **Emphasize Training that Supports Theater Security Cooperation Plans.**

Until recently, the US military has not traditionally viewed Theater Security Cooperation as a top priority or mission. Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), deterring war and promoting peace, covers a broad spectrum of activities that now consume the majority of the military's time and effort. TSCP is woven throughout MOOTW continuum as demonstrated by current operations around the globe. The military can no longer afford to wipe our hands and leave the cleanup to "someone else" after MCO are complete. Unless the military culture embraces this mission, TSC programs will be much less effective. Institutionally, there must be an understanding that these operations span the full range of military operations and are as important as MCO.

DoD Directive 3000 states,

Incorporate stability operations into military training, exercises, and planning, including intelligence campaign plans and support plans³¹

Military Exercises - The TSC mission must be incorporated into all facets of the Combatant Commander's training plan. For example, European Command (EUCOM) could

conduct a dedicated TSC exercise from the JSB in conjunction with JTF HOA. This type of exercise could incorporate all components of the joint force including interagency support, accomplish actual TSC goals and objectives and train to real world contingencies.

Military Training - Instituting language requirements is a good start, but efforts must not stop there. Exchange programs between the DoS and military in capacities other than embassy assignments within the theater must occur. Permanently place a DoS representative as part of a CSG/ESG staff to increase interoperability and understanding between the DoD and DoS. This action alone would produce a professional cadre of officers and diplomats who understand the other's language, mentality, operating procedures, and capabilities.

Finally, training must instruct on interagency, NGO/IO roles, missions, and how these organizations integrate with the military during TSC Operations and crisis situations. Familiarization visits to NGO field sites and the organizations headquarters should be conducted when possible. Institute a short internship (one or two months) with NGOs like USAID etc...to better understand these organizations and how they function. These efforts will dispel the negative stereotypes that exist between the military and NGOs and produce a more effective force when integrating with a CMOC on the JSB. These initiatives ultimately facilitate a more effective JSB that better supports the Combatant Commander's TSCP.

The JSB's role in TSC activities

The following list of TSC activities the JSB can conduct is **not** all inclusive. The following items are listed to **stimulate thought** and demonstrate that many TSC activities are exportable and can be accomplished from the JSB:

- **Leverage the National Guard State Partnership Program (SPP).**

The National Guard SPP links states with countries to support the Combatant Commanders Theater Security Cooperation Plans. For example, the SPP under EUCOM's TSCP has targeted the country of Africa. The importance of Africa has grown because of large uncontrolled areas and porous borders that can foster terrorist activity. Strategically, Africa acts as a gateway and unless the United States maintains a presence, terrorist will possess a training ground and uncontrolled entry into Europe.³²

The National Guard SPP has prioritized the African mission and acts as a force provider that conducts activities with both military and non-military agencies.³³ In fact, four States have existing partnerships with countries in the region.³⁴ The Guard places an emphasis on lower priority nations where EUCOM may not have the resources to provide much focus. The National Guard conducts numerous activities that include military to military and non-military agencies contact such as: counterterrorism, drug interdiction, support to civil authorities, WMD non-proliferation, border security and customs.³⁵ As the global rebasing strategy takes away resources from EUCOM, the National Guard will be required to fill a greater role in TSC operations. With the Navy postured with the JSB capability, recently taking the lead in JTF HOA, and seeking a greater role in GWOT, it makes sense to partner with the National Guard SPP. In areas where political sensitivities prohibit a large US presence, the JSB working with the SPP will enable the National Guard to maintain a smaller footprint while working from a reliable base of operations. These combined operations will assist the SPP in establishing relationships, maintaining stability and promoting regional access.³⁶ Leveraging the SPP accomplishes DoS, OSD and Combatant Commander TSC Theater goals,³⁷ and properly employs the National Guard in short term, TSCP activities.

- **Humanitarian Assistance (HA)**

HA consists of more than just Disaster Relief operations. Other facets of the program include HA excess property (donating low tech equipment to orphanages, schools, and clinics). Transfer of the equipment with American Embassies in the region could be coordinated and transferred via the JTF or JIACG cell aboard the JSB. Other program aspects include HA “other” - construction/renovation of public facilities etc... All of these programs could easily be conducted from the JSB.³⁸

- **Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET)**

Combined training can be facilitated from the JSB or conducted on the JSB. “The purpose of JCET is training provided the host nation military by Special Operations Forces (SOF).”³⁹ SOF components from the Army, Navy, Marines, or Air Force could conduct training utilizing the JSB as a hub of operations. The point is that the JSB, tailored to meet the operational need, possibly a Cruiser, Patrol Craft, and two helicopters, could easily accomplish the mission. While SOF forces would not necessarily return to the JSB each day, the hub of operations would permit completion of the training objectives without placing a large footprint ashore.

- **Conferences and Seminars conducted aboard the Joint Sea Base.**

The US Navy routinely embarks Distinguished Visitors aboard vessels to profile life on a ship and provide insight into daily operations. When regional security or facilities prohibit conferences from occurring ashore, seminars should be hosted on the Joint Sea Base. Seminars seldom run more than a two or three days and typically consist of small numbers of personnel that larger ships could easily accommodate.

- **Deployment for training.**

Deployment for training is defined as US military personnel or units deployment to a foreign country, performing one of its mission tasks (such as road building) and redeploying.⁴⁰ Embarking Navy Sea Bees or an Army Engineering Unit for the purposes of building roads, or improving infrastructure should be routine when access is limited and security cooperation activities requiring these services are essential.

Counter argument: Is Seabasing a valid concept that supports TSCP?

The Seabasing concept has many critics. Many throughout DoD believe the US Navy's approach to Seabasing is merely a justification for overpriced shipbuilding programs. Others believe that keeping men and ships at sea indefinitely is a challenging or impossible task. "Men become fatigued and ships need maintenance."⁴¹ Indefinitely sustaining a JSB presents formidable challenges that have been questioned numerous times. In reality, most TSC activities could easily be sustained by the JSB. With the exception of humanitarian assistance, TSC activities do not require the same extensive logistics as MCO.

Critics site a lack of Joint Coordination and development with regard to the Seabasing concept. However, the Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) recently endorsed the concept and drafted a Joint Requirements Oversight Council Memo (JROCM) to produce a capabilities document.⁴² Additionally, the Joint Integrating Concept for Seabasing was recently approved, and now, as a result of JCS endorsement, the concept is completing the Joint Capabilities Integrating and Development System that gives the Seabasing concept credence as a future capability for the US military.⁴³ **Seemingly, the entire premise of the JSB conducting TSC operations rests on the emerging concept and its successful implementation.** However, this is not the case; the US Navy routinely conducts Seabasing operations. Numerous examples profile JSB operations in recent history: USS Mt Whitney

during JTF HOA, USS Kitty Hawk during OEF, and USS America in Operation Uphold Democracy.⁴⁴ However, as mentioned earlier, the JSB must become fully integrated, and TSC training enhanced for the JSB to become an optimal platform for accomplishing this mission.

Conclusion

The Joint Sea Base is a proven concept that has the capabilities to accomplish much of the TSCP mission. The JSB provides the access to emerging areas where a US presence is required, but large footprints ashore are limited or prohibited. With the realignment of US forces resulting in fewer personnel and facilities overseas, the role of the JSB in conducting the TSC mission will only increase. The JSB can serve as a valuable transformation tool filling the TSCP gap in the Combatant Commander's Area of Responsibility resulting from diminished resources attributed to global basing realignment. With the procurement of additional platforms to support the JSB and the full integration of the joint force, the effectiveness of the JSB in shaping the theater will only increase. The end result will be the JSB emerging as a capability that enables the Combatant Commanders to more effectively conduct the TSC mission.

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